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TAGS: [BEXP](#) [BTIO](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: 2010 BFIF Proposal: Building AMCHAM Capacity and Promoting  
Corporate Social Responsibility

REF: 09STATE126674

¶1. Embassy La Paz is pleased to respond to EEB/CBA's Solicitation for 2010 Business Facilitation Incentive Fund program proposals with a request for funding for two projects: 1) capacity building for the American Chamber of Commerce Bolivia (AMCHAM Bolivia) and 2) support for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and "Doing Business with America" programming at ExpoCruz 2010. These projects are designed to support the State Department's goals of encouraging private sector growth and investment and opening markets and creating opportunities for U.S. goods and services.

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Project 1: Capacity Building for the American Chamber of Commerce in Bolivia

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¶2. With the AMCHAM Bolivia Board of Director's concurrence, Post would like to use BFIF funds to build capacity at the chamber to track and advocate for trade policy benefitting United States and Bolivian trade and expand business facilitation services for Bolivian businesses. Current Government of Bolivia economic policy rejects capitalism in favor of state control and management, with President Morales regularly stating that "capitalism is the greatest enemy of humanity." This, combined with the general downturn in the American economy and the cancelation of Bolivian's trade preferences under the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), has led to a diminished American business community presence and a decline in overall bilateral trade.

¶3. In this context, AMCHAM Bolivia is struggling to maintain its relevance, yet with over 16,500 companies and individuals as members, including many of the largest corporations operating in the country, it retains a significant and active membership who would like to see trade between the United States and Bolivia resurge. It is also a logical venue for promoting the benefits of free trade and highlighting the contributions a market economy can offer a society. Recent AMCHAM activity has been focused around meetings and seminars on these topics, which in response to a survey conducted the last year, the membership said it found interesting, but not terribly relevant. Discussion of this finding and the operating context, has led to strong board support for adding a trade policy project and for strengthening business facilitation services offered by the chamber.

¶4. Both the Embassy Commercial Office and AMCHAM Bolivia receive periodic requests from Bolivian businesses looking to

export to the United States, and to a lesser extent Bolivian businesses looking for American suppliers or other types of American partnerships. These Bolivian businesses find it difficult and inconvenient to come to the U.S. Embassy and in some cases are looking for specialized services, such as background checks or product or brand promotion that the Embassy does not offer. Seeing this situation as an opportunity, the AMCHAM Bolivia Board would like to explore the possibility of a partnership that builds AMCHAM Bolivia's capacity to provide the following types of services to Bolivian businesses: tracking of both United States and Bolivian trade issues, development of and advocacy for trade policy recommendations (in coordination with other industry associations as appropriate), technical assistance to (new) exporters to the U.S. market, coordination of Bolivian industry participation in U.S. trade shows, and responding to general inquiries about doing business with the United States from Bolivian businesses. The AMCHAM Bolivia has indicated its willingness to devote office space and the services of administrative staff to this effort. However, there is currently no one on the Chamber's staff with the background to handle the research and customer service aspects of this effort.

¶5. Post requests BFIF support for: the first six months salary of a new hire (\$6,000), new hire training at AACCLA (\$6,000), and the purchase and installation of web-based import-export resources and matching making tools (\$3,000). It is anticipated that after six months, the chamber will pick up the salary of the trade analyst.

¶6. Total Budget Request: \$15,000

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Project 2: Corporate Social Responsibility and "Doing Business with America" Programming at ExpoCruz 2010

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¶7. For the past several years, AMCHAM Bolivia has organized the USA Pavilion at Bolivia's largest trade show, ExpoCruz, held every September in Santa Cruz. This show has been a U.S. Department of Commerce certified trade fair for many years and is applying again in 2010. Post would like to use BFIF funds to promote Corporate Social Responsibility issues, and underwrite a "How to Do Business with the U.S." seminar at the fair. Post believes that this widely attended and highly visible venue provides an excellent opportunity to promote a shared Bolivian and U.S. interest in the social contributions of private enterprise and highlight U.S. interest in maintaining an active trade portfolio with Bolivia.

¶8. Post will use BFIF funds to register for booth space within the American Pavilion at the show and will offer several local NGOs working on CSR issues including el Consejo Empresarial para el Desarrollo Sostenible (CEDES), Instituto Boliviano de Comercio Exterior (IBCE), and Centro para Promocion de Tecnologias Sostenibles (CPTS), a USAID grantee, the opportunity to staff the booth and promote their work. Post will work with AMCHAM Bolivia and relevant US organizations to identify U.S. private sector CSR exemplars and invite them to participate in ExpoCruz within the American Pavilion. Post has included a request for a CSR expert as part of our 2010 Speakers Program requests. Ideally, this person would be available to make a presentation at the fair.

¶9. At the same show, Post would like to complement our AMCHAM Bolivia capacity building initiative described above by supporting an AMCHAM-sponsored "Doing Business with the United States" seminar. Possible speakers for the "Doing Business with the U.S." program are a Commercial Service representative from another Embassy in the region; the new trade analyst and business facilitation specialist hired into the AMCHAM; a specialist from the Department of Commerce in Washington, DC; and representatives from AMCHAM member businesses that have successfully entered into partnerships with U.S. companies or who are currently exporting to the United States. The proposed agenda includes discussion of finding a U.S. partner, what U.S. companies need and want from local partners, how to import products from Bolivia to the U.S.,

and business facilitation services offered by the AMCHAM to member companies. If this project is approved, Post will use fees generated through our fee-for-service business facilitation program to repeat the seminar at a venue in the city of La Paz while the speakers are in the country.

¶10. Post requests BFIF funding for: trade show registration fees (\$2,000) and for travel and per diem for speakers (\$5,000).

¶11. Total Budget Request: \$7,000.

¶12. Please do not hesitate to contact Lori Michaelson, Economic Officer, for additional information about either of these proposals (michaelsonlj@state.gov or 202-370-6257 x8862).  
Creamer